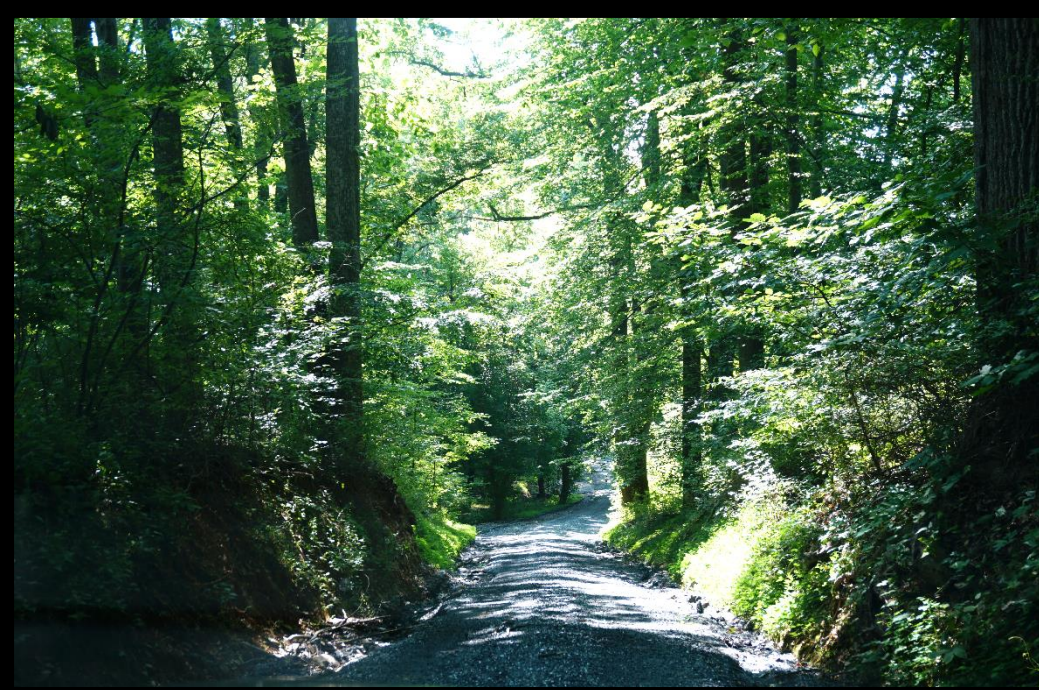


# Draft Sugarloaf Treasured Landscape Management Plan



Open Houses  
August 17 & 19, 2021



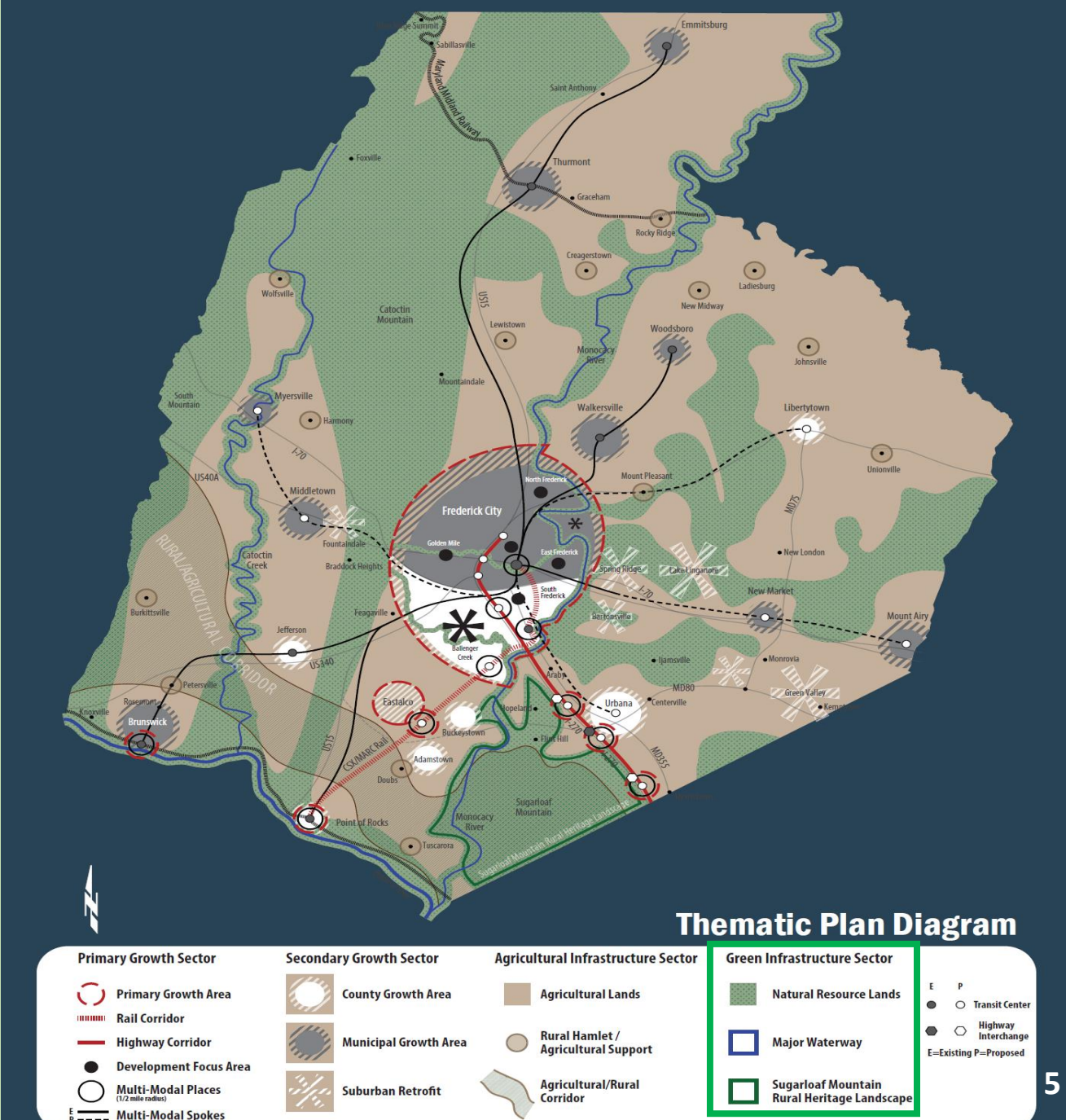




The *Livable Frederick Master Plan*, adopted by the County Council on September 3, 2019 is organized into three (3) sections:

- **Our Vision**, focusing on community aspirations, ideas, and preferences;
- **The Development Framework**, addressing the forms and patterns that will determine the physical shape of Frederick County;
- **The Action Framework**, including recommended positions, policies, and actions in four vision themes.

Additionally, the LFMP's **Thematic Plan Map** is a broad and vivid representation of - and a visual and narrative guide to - the future growth, preservation, and mobility patterns envisioned by Frederick County and its residents during the development of the Livable Frederick Master Plan.



Primary Growth Sector

- Primary Growth Area
- Rail Corridor
- Highway Corridor
- Development Focus Area
- Multi-Modal Places (1/2 mile radius)
- Multi-Modal Spokes

Secondary Growth Sector

- County Growth Area
- Municipal Growth Area
- Suburban Retrofit

Agricultural Infrastructure Sector

- Agricultural Lands
- Rural Hamlet / Agricultural Support
- Agricultural/Rural Corridor

Green Infrastructure Sector

- Natural Resource Lands
- Major Waterway
- Sugarloaf Mountain Rural Heritage Landscape

- E P
- Transit Center
- Highway Interchange
- E=Existing P=Proposed



**Wellhead Protection Ordinance:** In 2007 the county adopted wellhead protection legislation that regulate hazardous substance storage tanks. Any tank within certain distances of community groundwater supply wells must be above ground with 100% catchment basins or double-walled containment and spill protection alarms. The wellhead protection regulations also prohibit certain land uses and activities within wellhead protection areas.

**Forest Resource Ordinance:** The county's Forest Resource Ordinance (FRO) was adopted in 1992 and is applied through the development review process to subdivisions and site plans. The FRO allows for on-site or off-site afforestation, purchase of forest banking credits, or a fee-in-lieu payment into the forest fund. The highest priority for meeting FRO requirements is the afforestation of stream valleys within the particular development or at least within the same watershed. Further, FRO afforestation and forest 'banking' priority areas are stream valleys on agriculturally-zoned land.

**Resource Conservation Zoning:** The Resource Conservation (RC) Zoning District is applied throughout the county, with the largest portion comprised of the forestlands on and around Catocin Mountain, South Mountain and Sugarloaf Mountain. The RC Zone limits new residential subdivision lots to 10 acres in size and prohibits development on slopes of 25% or more. The RC zone does not permit the construction of new public streets as part of residential subdivisions. Timber harvesting is permitted in all zoning districts with an approved logging permit. The Frederick County Forestry Board must also review and approve proposals for timber harvesting in the Resource Conservation zone to ensure sound forestry best management practices are employed.

**Development Review Process:** The Maryland Department of Natural Resources has an opportunity to review proposed subdivision and site plan applications to determine the existence of threatened and rare species on a subject site.

**Stream Restoration:** The National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Program (also known as the county's stormwater permit) requires water monitoring, watershed assessment, public education, and the restoration of degraded stream corridors. The county's first restoration project was completed in 2007 and involved stream channel rehabilitation and riparian buffer plantings along a portion of Ballenger Creek at the Ballenger Creek Elementary School.

**Natural Resource Comprehensive Plan Designation:** The Natural Resource land use plan designation is applied in the county to mountain areas with contiguous forests and to stream corridors. Stream corridors include major streams defining the county's 20 subwatersheds. Also included within mountain/forestlands and stream corridors are 100-year floodplain, plant/animal habitats, steep slopes, and wetlands. A purpose of the land use plan designation is to identify and highlight these features relative to growth areas. The plan designation itself is not a regulation, but it does provide the basis for considering the application of Resource Conservation zoning.

**Public Ownership:** Public ownership of parks and natural resource protection areas provides the greatest degree of protection for any sensitive area feature. There are over 25,000 acres of predominantly forested land under municipal, state, and federal ownership. Municipal ownership is comprised of watershed protection lands primarily in the Catocin Mountains. State lands include Catocin and South Mountains. While forestland is the predominant feature under public ownership, also included within these areas are steep slopes, streams, habitat of threatened and endangered species, and wetlands.

### **Sugarloaf Mountain Rural Heritage Landscape**

The area surrounding, and including, Sugarloaf Mountain is located along Frederick County's southern edge in the largely undeveloped wedge of land between the Interstate 270 corridor and the CSX Rail line (Frederick spur) – continues to maintain its locally iconic status. This valued rural preserve, punctuated by the visual prominence of the mountain's dual peaks, and grounded by the beauty and history in the surrounding fields and forests, is recognized as a special place even in a county that is home to many special places.

The Sugarloaf area has already been demarcated as the Sugarloaf Mountain Historic Survey District which covers approximately 10,500 acres of land including the 3,200 acres which make up the mountain itself and have been preserved by Gordon Strong and his heirs under the Stronghold Trust. Immediately west of the Sugarloaf district is the Carrollton Manor Rural Historic District (9,300 acres), the Washington Run Rural Area (2,715 acres) and, across the Potomac River in Loudoun County, Virginia, the Catocin Rural Historic District, a 25,000-acre National

The Livable Frederick

# Implementation Program

October 2019



Livable Frederick  
Frederick County, Maryland

One such measure is in place. The designation of the area as an Opportunity Zone – incentivizing development through the availability of investment tax credits – aligns with the County's plan to encourage and support the redevelopment of areas currently supported by public infrastructure over the development of outlying vacant lands.

## SUGARLOAF MOUNTAIN

*Treasured Landscape Management Plan (Large Area Plan)*

### *RATIONALE FOR PLANNING*

The development of a comprehensive plan update for the Sugarloaf Mountain area would allow Frederick County to consider its options as it seeks to enhance, and in some cases protect, the natural, cultural, and historical characteristics that define this part of Frederick County. To a large extent, it has been the efforts of private foundations, thoughtful residents, and individual landowners that have maintained this largely undisturbed and intact place. Sugarloaf Mountain is a recognizable landmark to many in the region and serves as the centerpiece and defining feature of the southeastern portion of the county. It is in the best interest of both the local community, as well as the larger regional community, to make efforts now that will permit our grandchildren to appreciate this mountain and its surrounding forests, farmlands, and distinct settlements.

A planning process for the Sugarloaf Mountain District must include preparatory efforts including:

- Identification of key stakeholders including residents, landowners, businesses, institutional groups, such as Stronghold Incorporated
- A scoping document that establishes a conceptual study area
- Cultural and Historical Resources Identification Report
- Visual resources report to establish potential viewsheds of merit and local importance

In recent years at Sugarloaf Mountain, neighbors in the district have grappled with land use proposals that may have challenged the rural character of the area. Several of these permitted uses – and other uses allowed through the Special Exception process – could significantly alter the living environment for residents and visitors by introducing visual intrusions, traffic impacts, and sounds or noises audible across vast areas of the district. And while the mountain itself (approximately 3,000 acres within the district) is owned by the private non-profit Stronghold, Inc., the 1946 agreement struck by the original land aggregator, Gordon Strong, that permits public access to the mountain, includes a sunset date of 2045, after which ownership and public access is in question.

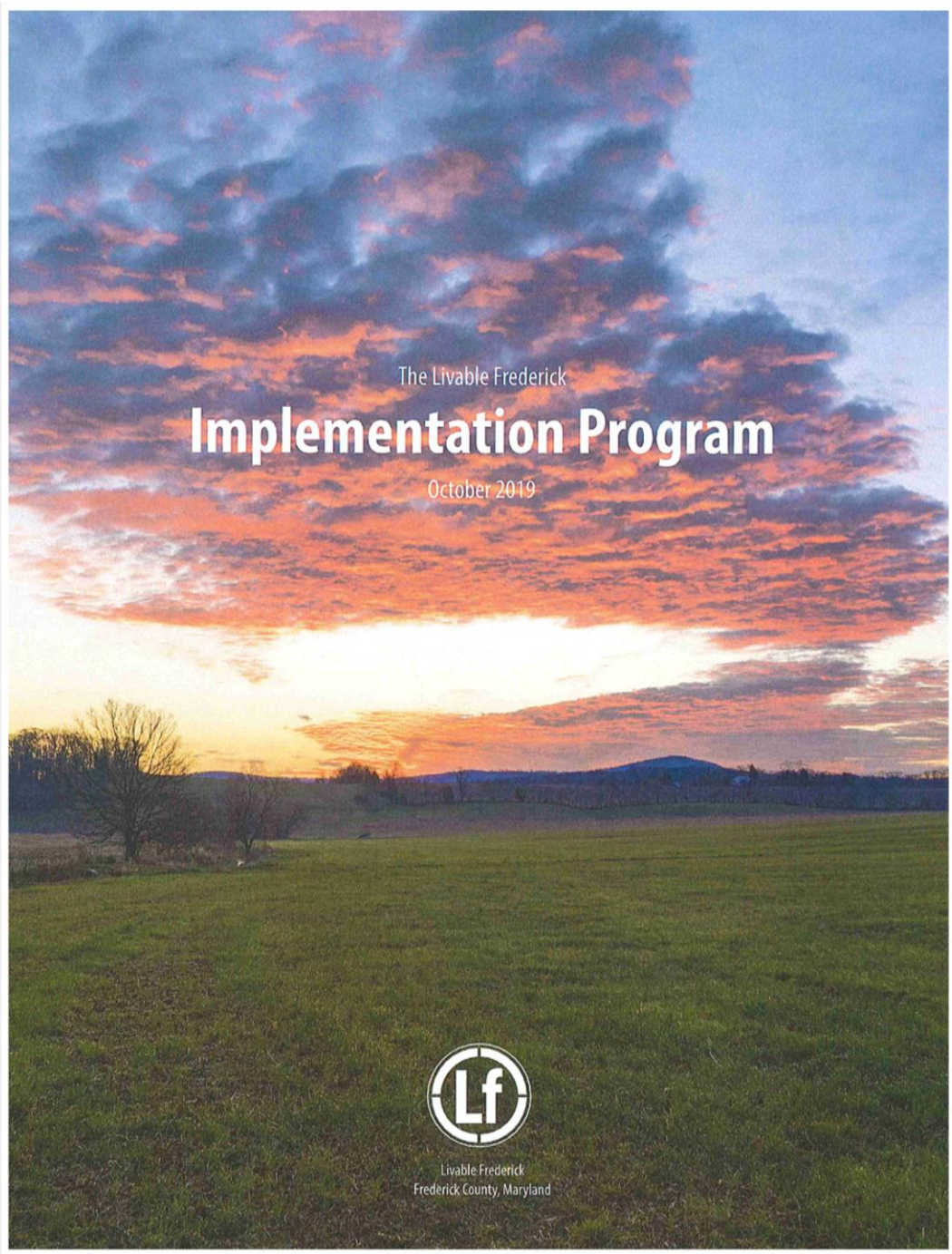
### *RATIONALE FOR TIMING*

Perhaps the most pressing immediate issue for the Sugarloaf Mountain area remains that of land use incompatibility, as well as the specter of physical development that could significantly diminish the views from, and of, the mountains themselves. The concerns of local residents can best be addressed comprehensively, in a way that reduces the possibility for continued site-specific conflicts that are resource and time consumptive for landowners, neighbors, and county officials. A comprehensive approach to documenting issues and finding solutions should begin in the very near future so that planning for this district is undertaken before significant changes to the area threaten the character of the mountain and lands surrounding it.

## THE AGRICULTURAL INFRASTRUCTURE PLAN

*(Functional Plan)*

An agricultural infrastructure plan is proposed in response to the Agricultural Infrastructure Sector identified in the Livable Frederick Master Plan. This sector is one of four main elements of the growth strategy articulated in the LFMP and is therefore an important aspect of implementation. Frederick County should make it a priority to do the planning necessary to create a fertile environment for successful agricultural businesses.



The Implementation Program of the *Livable Frederick Master Plan* identifies future planning efforts in the County and establishes a work plan and schedule for:

- Community & Corridor Plans
- Special Area Plans
- Functional Plans
- Other Focus/Study Areas

Initial Planning Initiatives:



*Sugarloaf Plan*



*South Frederick Corridors*

# The SUGARLOAF Area Plan

## BRIEFING BOOK



Livable Frederick Planning and Design Office  
Frederick County Government  
Frederick County Maryland  
30 North Market Street  
Frederick, MD 21701



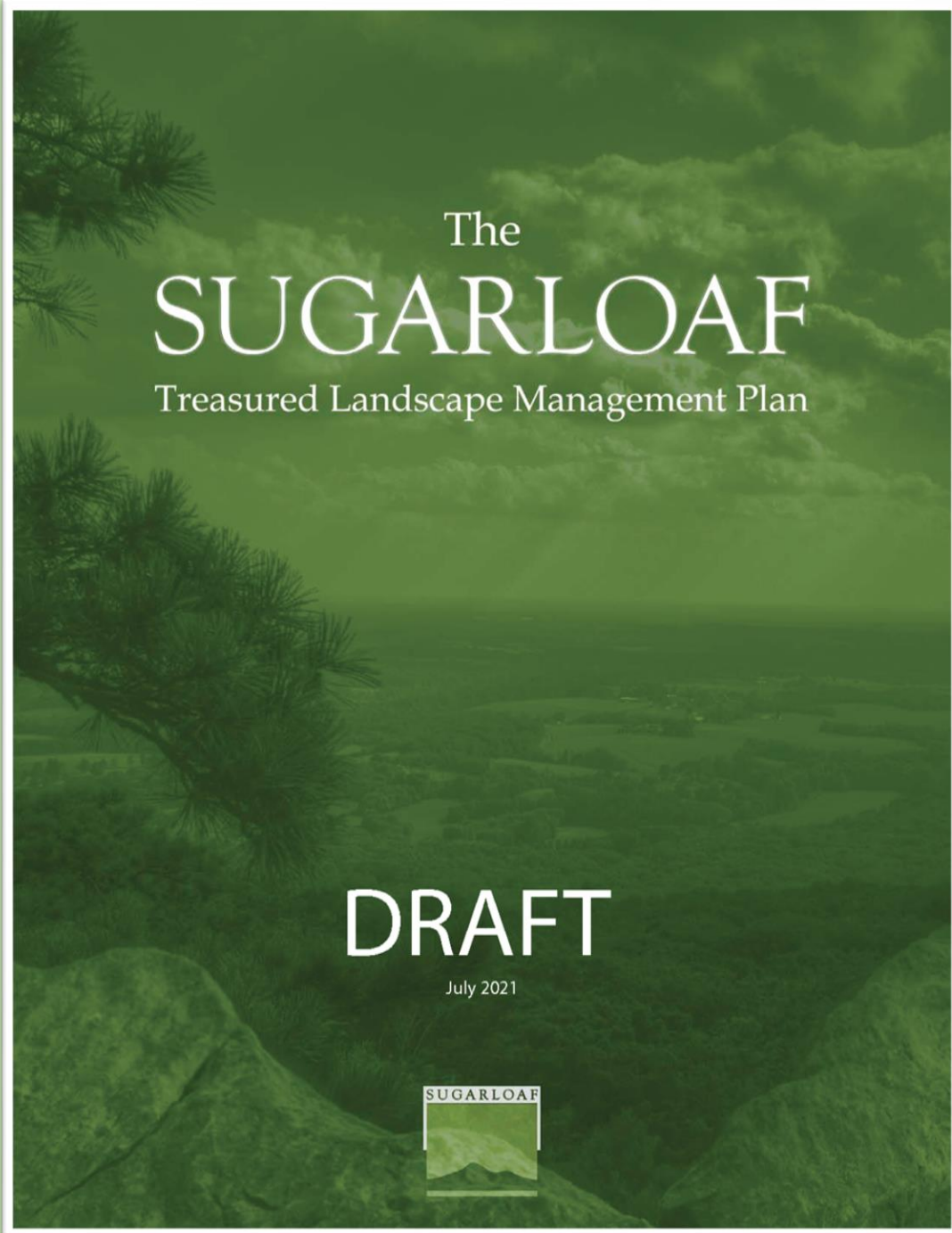
## The Sugarloaf Area Plan Timeline:

- February 10, 2020 – County announcement and kick-off of the Sugarloaf Area Plan & release of the “Briefing Book”



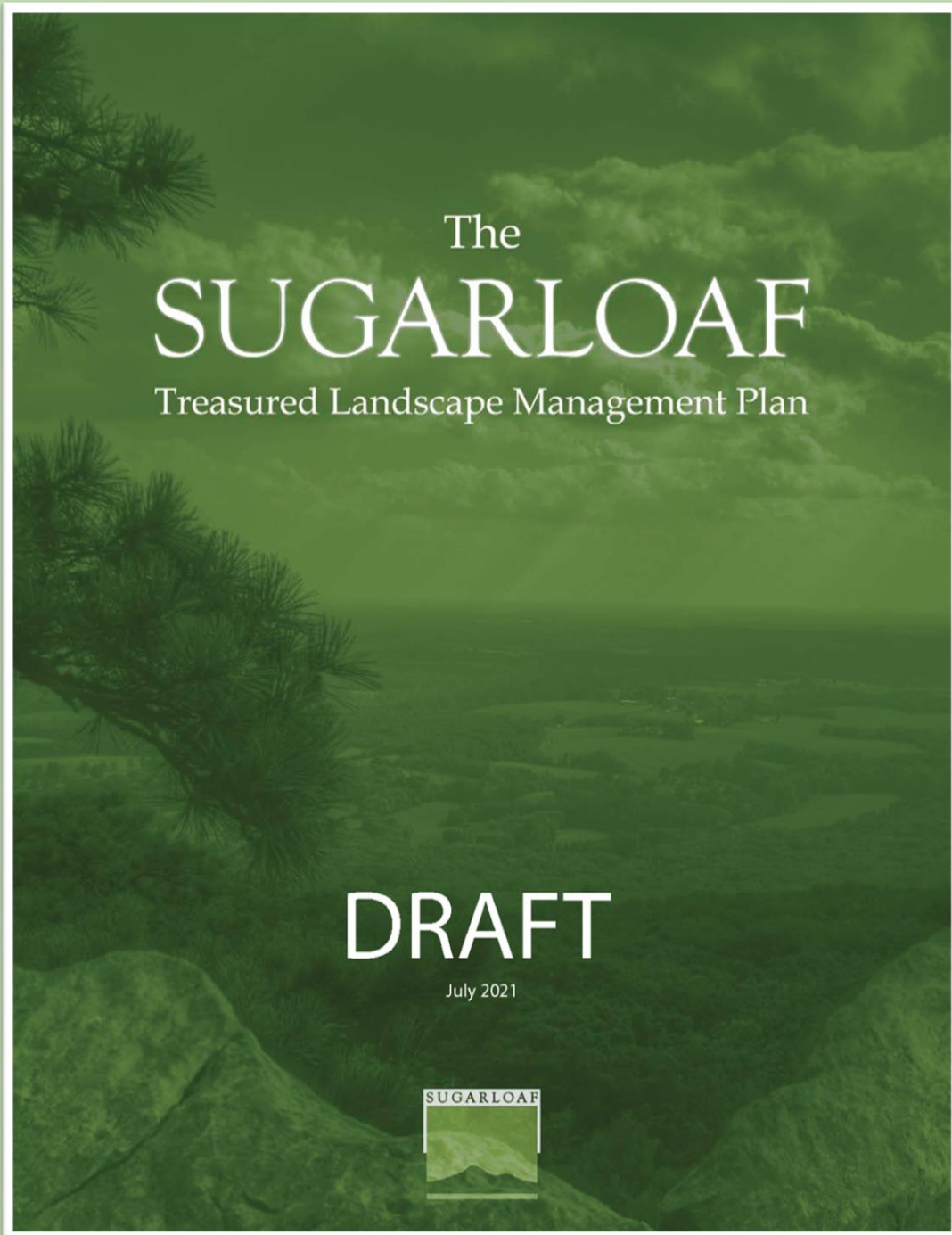
- February 27, 2020 – Community Open House



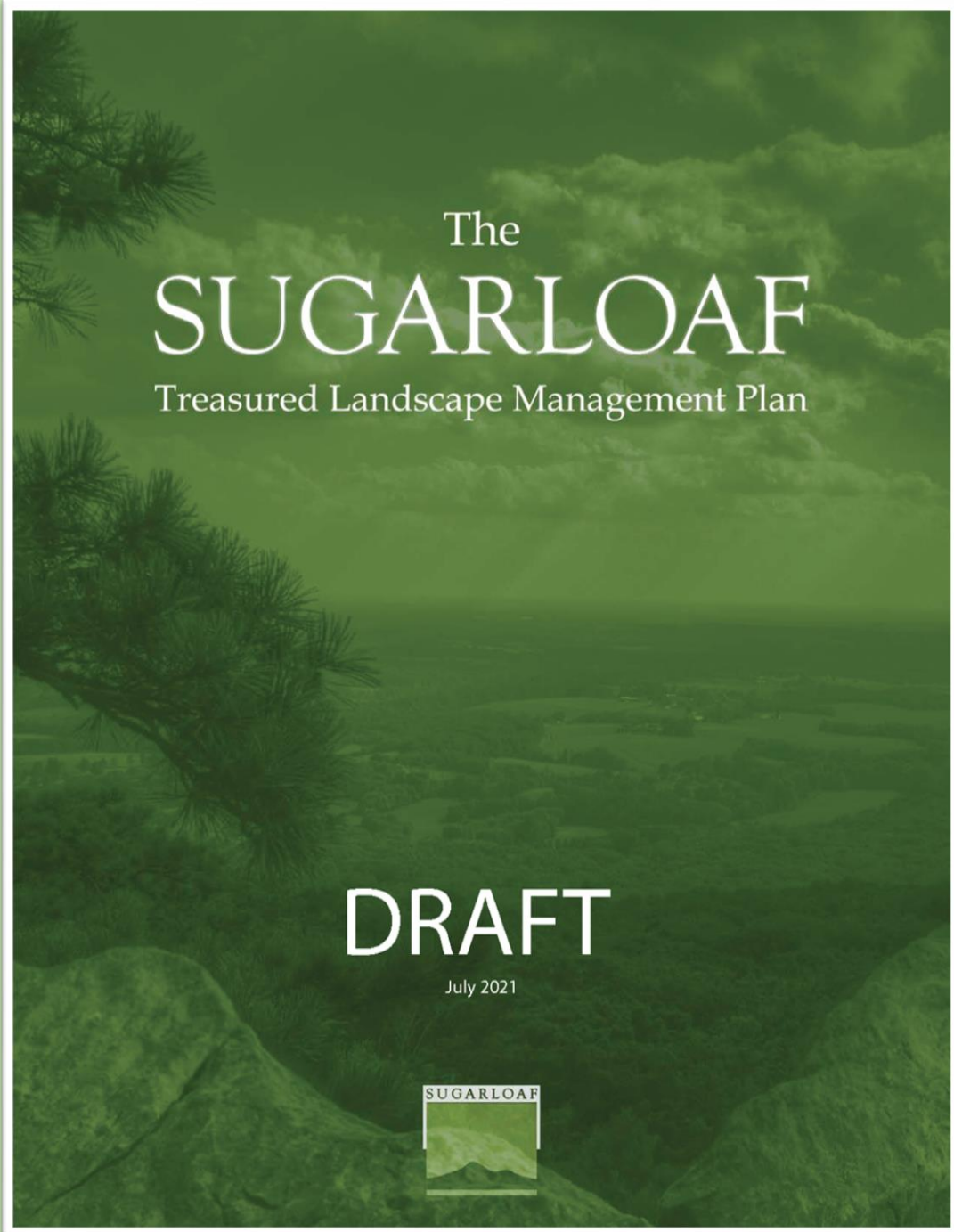


## Plan Review and Adoption Process:

- Draft Plan Released – July 30, 2021
- Advisory Group comments/recommendations
- Community Open Houses (Virtual) – August 17 & 19
- Planning Commission – Review, workshops, public hearing, and recommendation to County Council (to begin in September)
- County Council – Review, workshops, public hearing, adoption



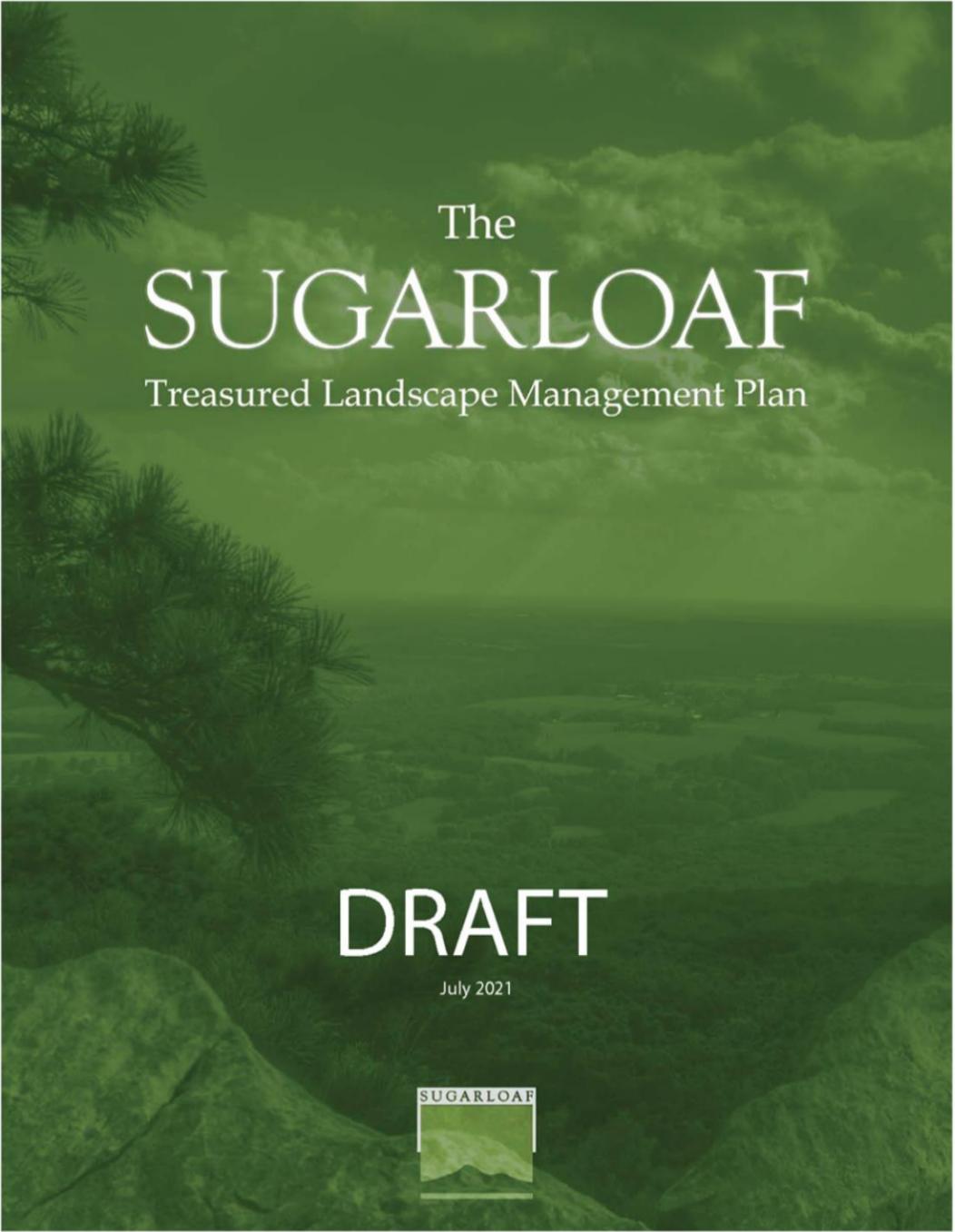
- **Plan Structure (Page v, vi)**
  - Chapter 1 Introduction & Background
  - Chapter 2 History and Culture
  - Chapter 3 Sugarloaf Mountain & Stronghold, Incorporated
  - Chapter 4 Land Use
  - Chapter 5 Transportation
  - Chapter 6 Watershed Water Quality
  - Chapter 7 Forestlands, Green Infrastructure, Biodiversity
  - Chapter 8 Climate Change
- **Vision Statement / Goals (Page 4)**
- **Policies / Initiatives (Within each chapter)**
- **Sugarloaf Rural Heritage Overlay Zoning District (pp. 40, 58, A-19)**
  - Purpose / Intent statement & Goals / Objectives



# The Sugarloaf Treasured Landscape Management Plan

## Goals:

- Protect and enhance the Sugarloaf Area's natural resources and environmental assets, including its forests, waters, biodiversity, and wildlife habitats.
- Strengthen the distinct place-based identity of the Sugarloaf Area through the stewardship of its scenic and rural character, and its agricultural and cultural resources.
- Foster a resilient human ecology through the mitigation of, and adaptation to, climate change.



The  
**SUGARLOAF**  
Treasured Landscape Management Plan

**DRAFT**

July 2021



### **Initiative 7B**

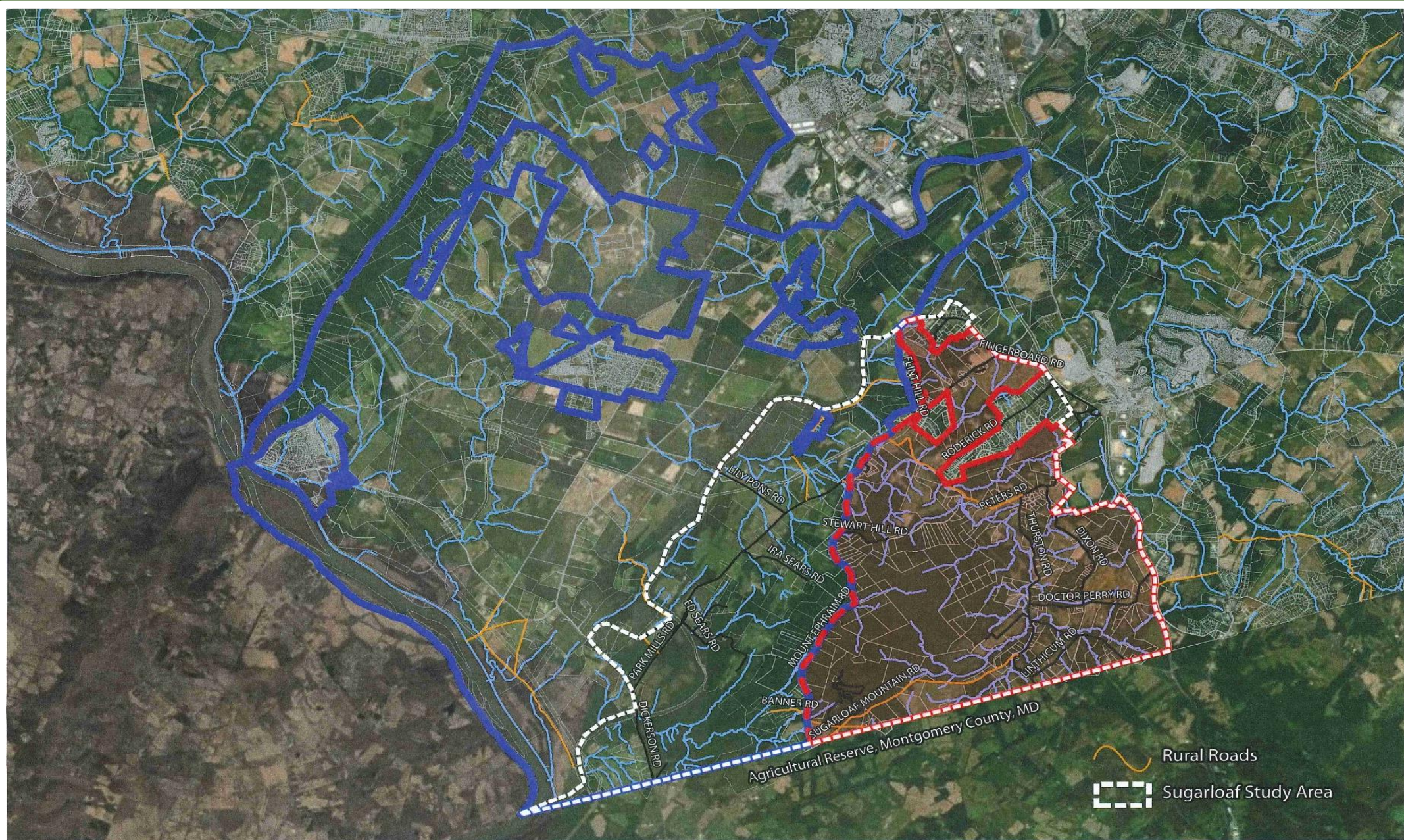
Establish the Sugarloaf Area Forest Initiative, modeled after the Linganore Watershed Forest Program, to utilize the County's Forest Resource Ordinance mitigation funds to plant new forest on private lands.

### **Initiative 7G**

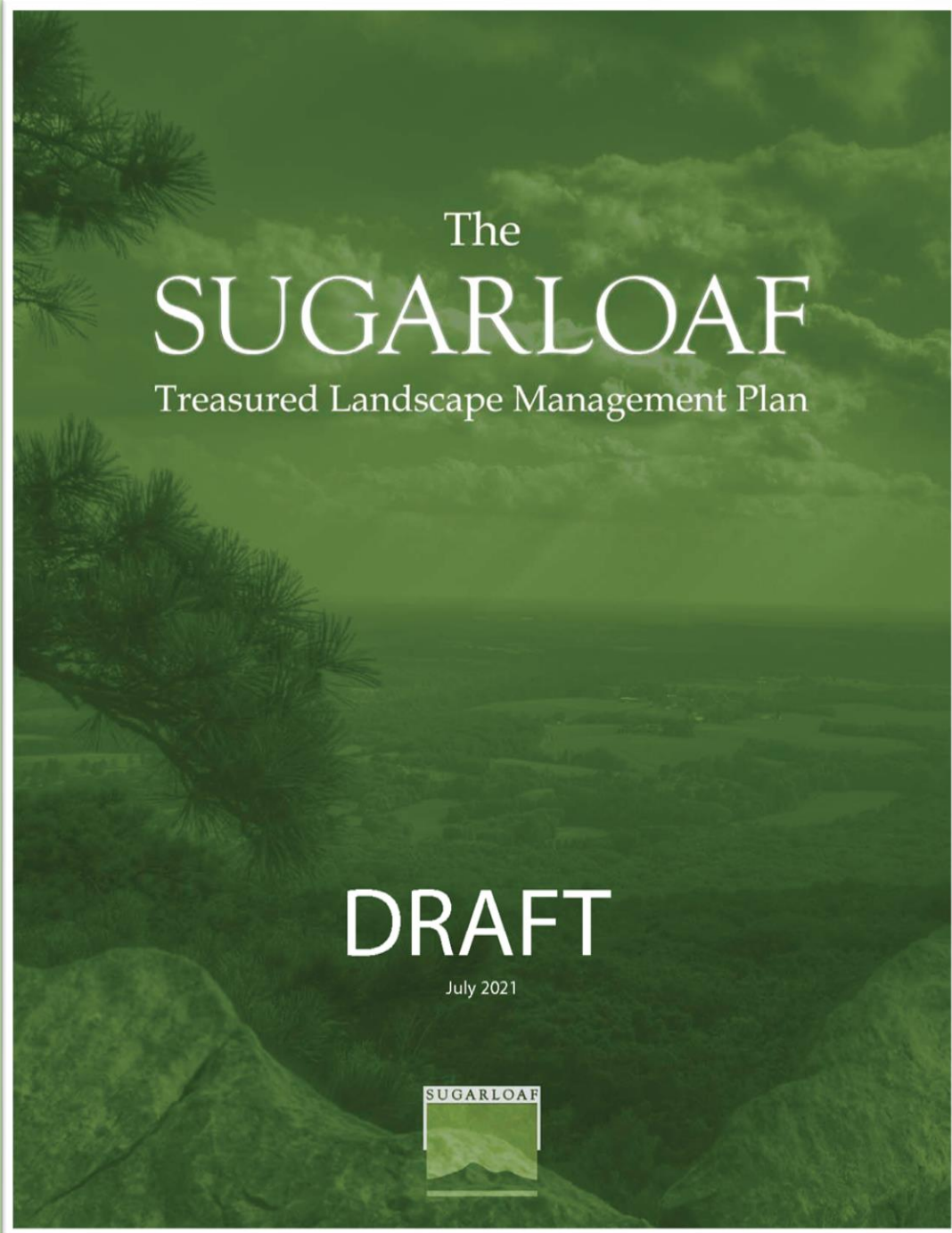
To improve public safety and reduce the costs of property insurance for residents and businesses within the Planning Area, establish a network of water storage tanks to be owned and maintained by the County for rural fire suppression. Once piloted in the Sugarloaf Area, this initiative should be expanded to other rural parts of the County.

### **Initiative 5A**

With the Sheriff's Office and the Division of Public Works, explore the application of speed calming techniques to deter motorists who exceed the speed limit on Thurston Road and Park Mills Road.



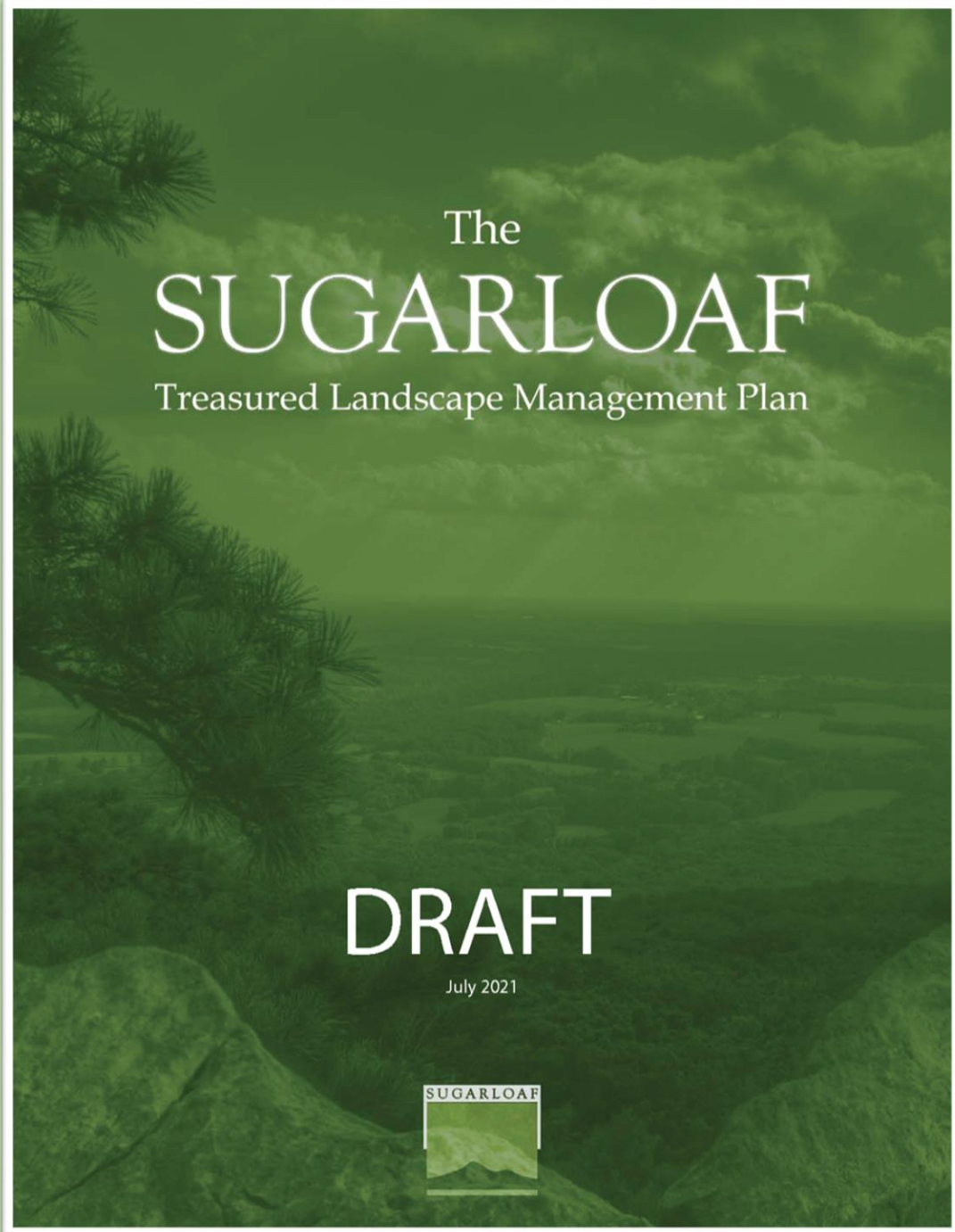
## Carrollton Manor Rural Legacy Area - Proposed Addition



## Proposed Sugarloaf Rural Heritage Overlay Zoning District

### **Purpose and Intent**

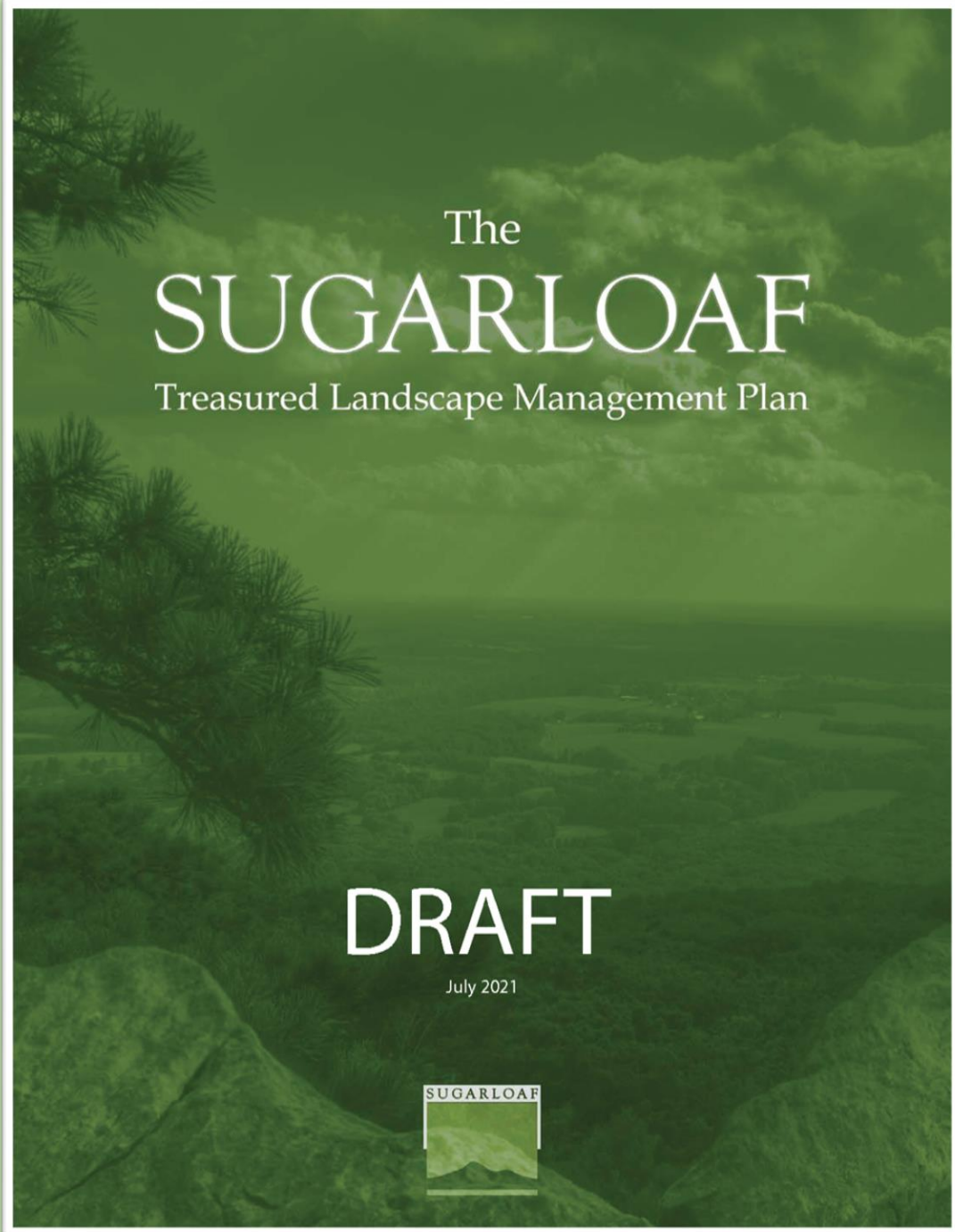
The Sugarloaf Planning Area has high quality natural resources and unique features that support a vast, diverse, and healthy environment. Special protection measures are needed where land use changes could threaten those resources, environments, and features. It is the intent of the County, in creating this District, to ensure the long-term sustainability, health, and integrity of natural environmental systems, and maintain and protect the ecological function and rural qualities of the landscapes that comprise the Sugarloaf Planning Area. The District establishes criteria, standards, and review procedures for land development activities to minimize or eliminate adverse impacts to water quality, forest resources, wildlife habitats, and scenic and rural landscape elements.



## Proposed Sugarloaf Rural Heritage Overlay Zoning District

### Goals

- To address the scale and visual impact of land uses and development that can degrade rural qualities, excessively burden the transportation network, and overwhelm the scenic and rural nature of the Sugarloaf Planning Area
- To minimize adverse impacts of land development activities on forestlands and natural habitats
- To regulate the amount of impervious surfaces to control the volume of stormwater runoff and stream bank erosion, maintain levels of groundwater infiltration, and retain as many of the functions provided by natural land as possible



# Proposed Sugarloaf Rural Heritage Overlay Zoning District

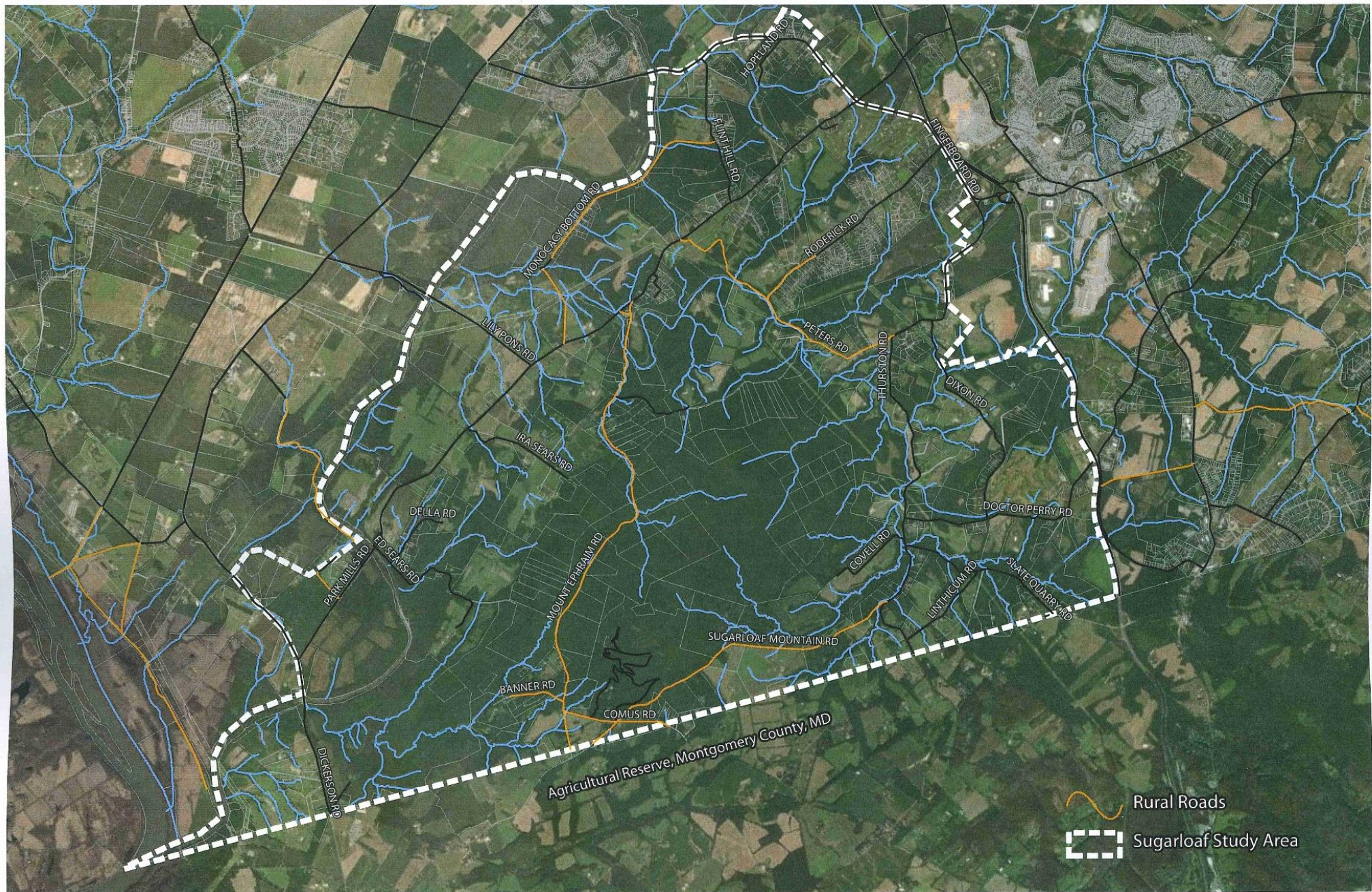
## Regulatory Component

Designed to address:

- Incompatible land uses in a rural area with significant environmental resources
- Scale, intensity, and impact of development on forestlands, water quality, road network, community

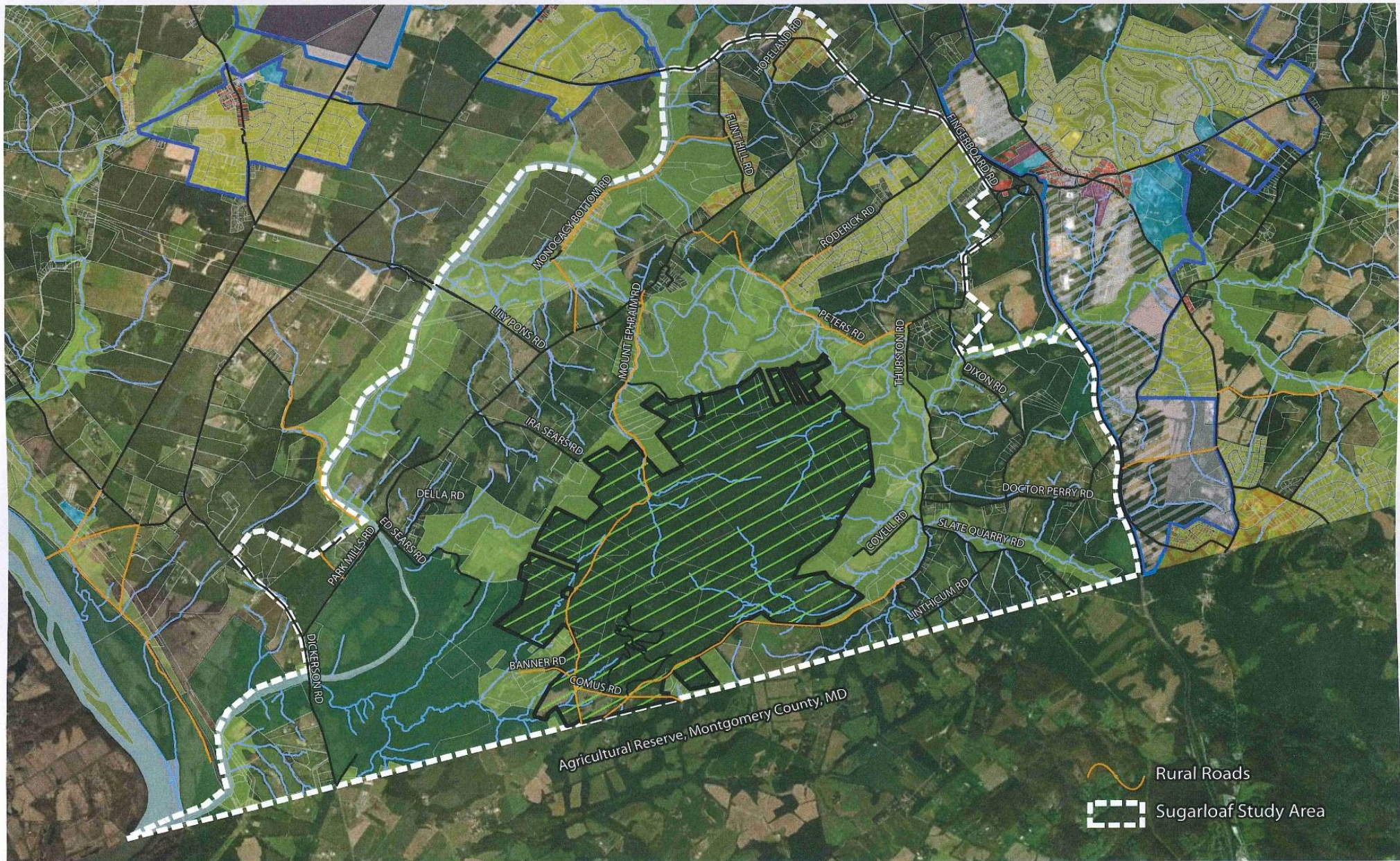
Contains:

- Design Standards
- Prohibited Uses, e.g., shooting ranges/clubs, carnivals, circuses, industrial waste landfills



**Planning Area Boundary**





## Land Use Plan Designations with Proposed "Treasured Landscape - Sugarloaf"



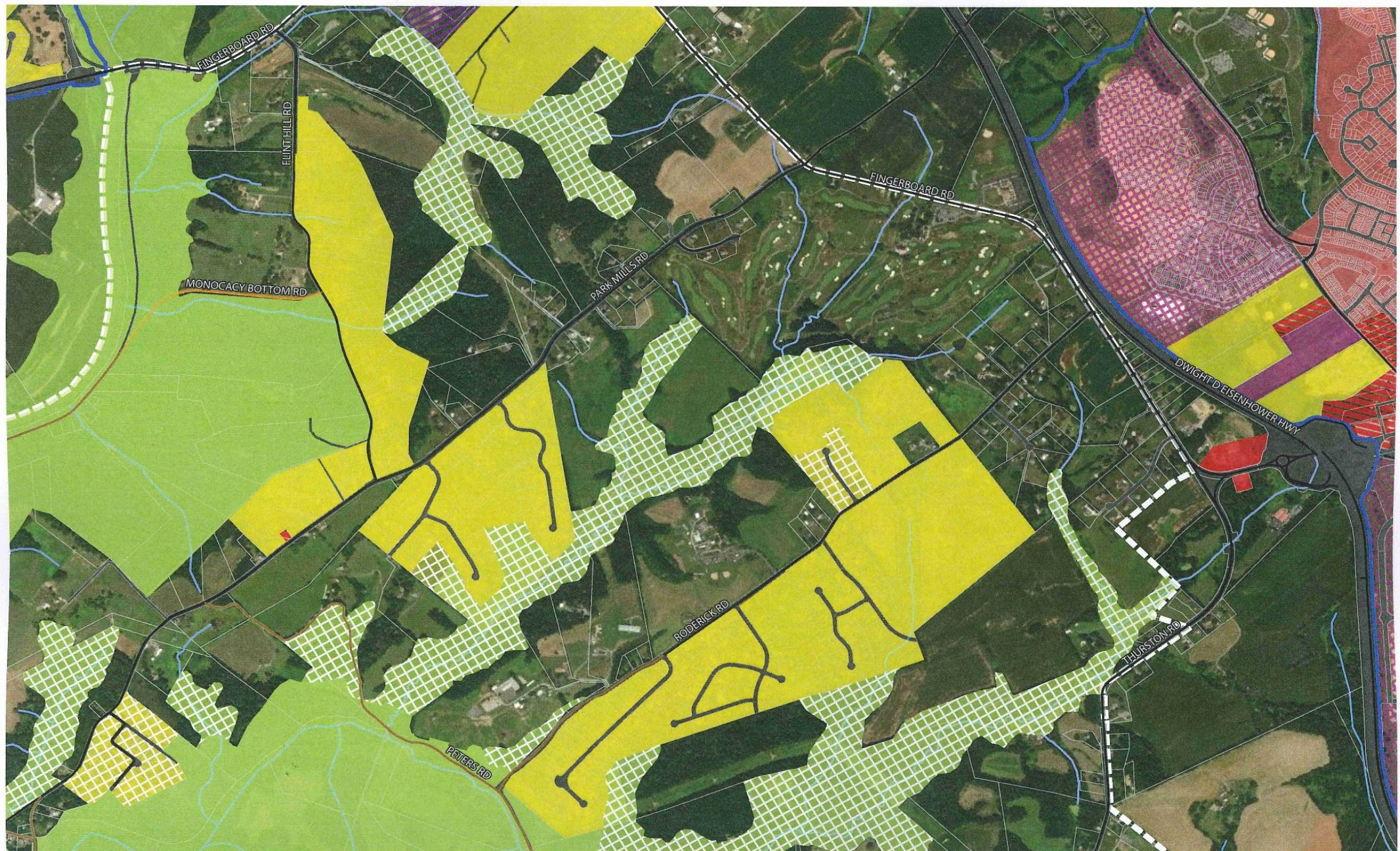
Map 4-3



# Zoning Districts - Proposed Zoning Changes **1**

RC – Resource Conservation
  R1 – Residential
  A – Agriculture





## Zoning Districts - Proposed Zoning Changes **2**

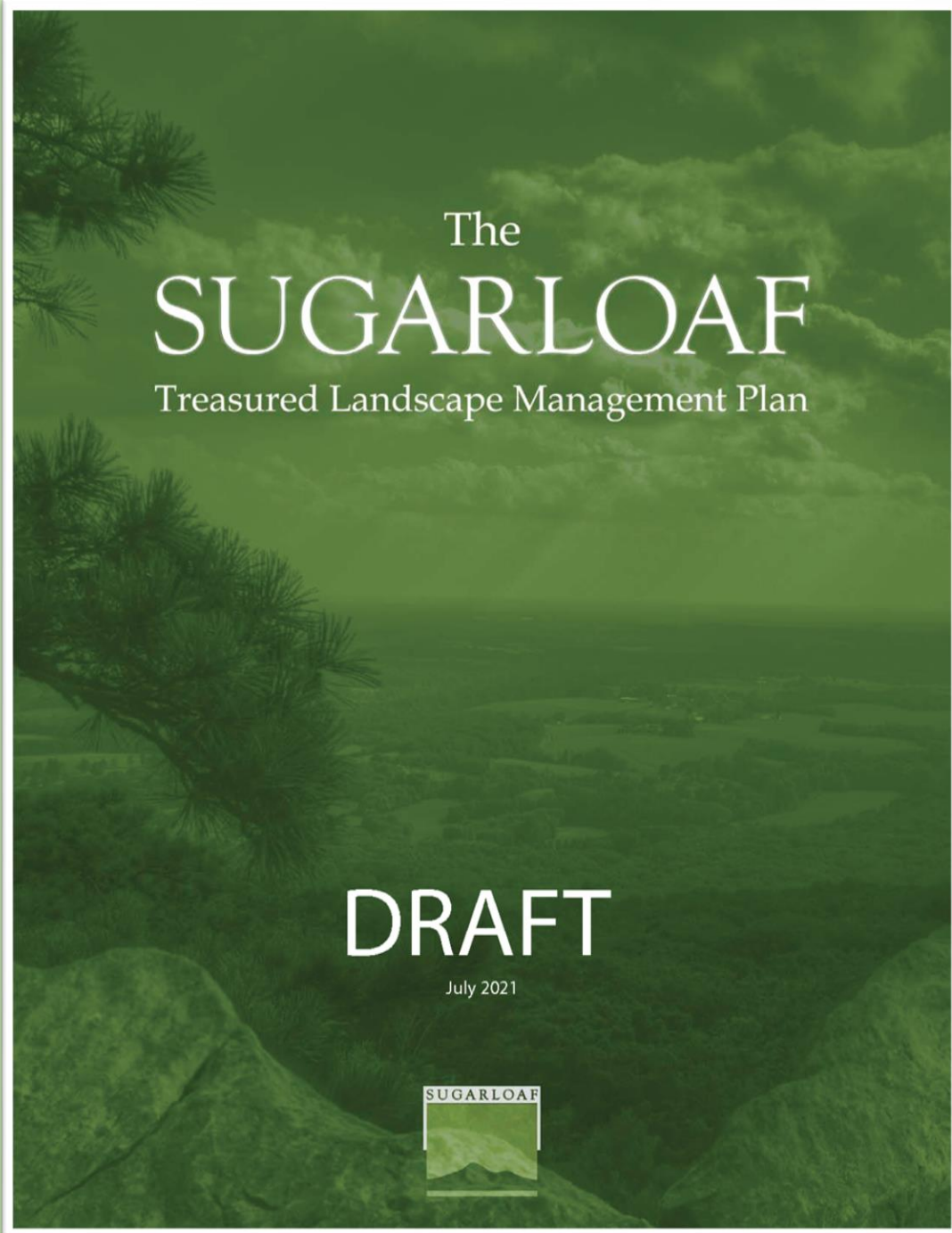
RC – Resource Conservation
  R1 – Residential
  A – Agriculture



**Zoning Districts - Proposed Zoning Changes 3**

RC – Resource Conservation      R1 – Residential





## Next Steps

- Compilation of comments received at the open houses
- Planning Commission Review
  - Workshops
  - Public Hearing
  - Recommendation to the County Council
- County Council Review
  - Workshops
  - Public Hearing
  - Adoption



# Thank you for attending! Please provide your feedback.



## Call In Information

Dial: 1-855-925-2801

Enter Code: 9006

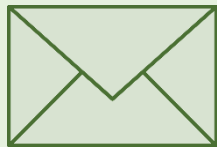


*Press \* for Meeting Options*

*Press 1 to listen to the meeting*

*Press \*2 to **record a comment** to be played during the meeting*

*Press \*3 to be placed in a queue to **comment live** during the meeting*



## Submit Comments via Email

[SugarloafAreaPlan@FrederickCountyMD.gov](mailto:SugarloafAreaPlan@FrederickCountyMD.gov)

